

**HOLLIFIELD
EARNs THE
POINTS**

POINTS are never easy to come by at Dulwich Hamlet but thanks to a goal by Mick Holifield in the 64th minute, Wycombe Wanderers captured all three from Saturday's Rothmans Isthmian League encounter at Champion Hill. There won't be too many sides who win at Dulwich this season and this victory could stand Wanderers in good stead later in the term.

But although this looks an

Dulwich Hamlet 0, Wycombe Wanderers 1

REPORT BY STUART EARP

impressive result on paper, Wycombe clearly have a long way to go to capture their best form. Manager Ted Powell made one change on Saturday, bringing in Dave Bullock at left-back and switching Paul Birdseye to his best position of right-back. Mick Sorenson was the man to drop out. Defensively, the side looked stronger for the switch.

It was in midfield and up front, however, that the Blues suffered at Dulwich. No one could take control of the middle, hard though Alan Davies tried, while Ian Pearson fought a lone battle against the sturdy Dulwich defence. Particularly disappointing were Howard Kennedy and George Cleary, who will need to improve considerably if they are to hold down places this season.

Once again Keith Mead was one of the few players to look at his best but he blotted his

copybook when he went into referee Ward's book for a second half foul on Mills.

It would be wrong to be over-critical of the players on Saturday, however, for much of their errors were due to the bizarre weather conditions. The pitch looked good at the start but a downpour made the ball skid alarmingly and also meant players found difficulty in turning. Later in the game, they had to contend with the sun in their eyes.

Dulwich, with virtually the same side as last season, had the better of the first half and dominated territorially. But they had the same problems as Wycombe in front of goal and Peter Spittle was rarely tested.

Best chance of the half fell to Pearson in only the 10th minute. Goalkeeper Alan Thomas, pressured by Dylan Evans, sent a goalkick straight to the Wycombe forward who ran on unmarked but lifted his shot high over the crossbar.

At the other end, Peter Smith somehow managed to run almost 50 yards through the visitors' ranks to play a 1-2 with Peter Mills but Smith's shot was deflected inches past the post by Spittle. A minute later the defence was pierced again when Chris Lewington fought his way through only to see Spittle go down well again.

Wanderers could find little by way of reply. Their passing was poor and a general lack of cohesion brought an end to many attacks. These errors repeatedly gave Dulwich possession and consequently most of the first half was spent in Wycombe territory.

The rain came down in earnest at the start of the second half and although a welcome sight to most, I'm sure the players could have done without it.

Once again in this half, Wycombe's play became riddled with errors and no one seemed capable of slowing the game down, controlling the ball and then making use of it to good effect. Dulwich, of course, were in no mood to allow that sort of time or space.

The goal proved something of a tonic to Wycombe and it came after one of the best moves of the match. For once, someone managed to hold the ball, look up and use it. Pearson had the ball wide on the wing and spotted Evans at the far post. He headed back across goal and Holifield was there to drive home a fine goal.

With Davies working busily, Wanderers improved a little after the breakthrough, but still failed to look menacing up front. Cleary had an unhappy time against the Dulwich back four and was eventually substituted.

Mead, skipper of the side this season, went into the book in the 81st minute when he brought down Mills on the edge of the box and two minutes later Wycombe received a large slice of luck when Dulwich came within inches of equalising.

Evans, back in defence, beat one man and was taking the ball away when he lost possession to Mills. He ran on and crossed to the far post with Wycombe's defence back pedalling. Charlie Pooley met the ball first time and lobbed over Spittle but saw the ball strike the upright and come back into play.

After that there were no further alarms for the Wanderers' defence.

DULWICH: A. Thomas; H. Falconer, P. Smith, R. Brookes, S. Rogers; P. Mills, T. Bladon, C. Lewington (sub. P. Reeves 65 mins.); A. Hart, C. Pooley, A. Jackson.

WYCOMBE: P. Spittle; P. Birdseye, K. Mead, A. Phillips, D. Bullock; A. Davies, H. Kennedy, M. Holifield; G. Cleary (sub. A. Horseman 81 mins.), D. Evans, I. Pearson.

Referee: A. Ward (New Southgate).

Half-time: 0-0. **Goalscorer:** Wycombe — Holifield (64).